

**International Community
and the
Battle for Tamil Eelam
(Sri Lanka)**



Thanjai Nalankilli

International Community and the Battle for Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)

by
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Preface

(common to all 5 books)

There are 5 books from us on the "Battle for Tamil Eelam". Together they provide an overall perspective on the ongoing conflict between the Tamil minority and Sinhala majority in Sri Lanka.

Articles in these 5 books were originally published between 1997 and 2019, at various points in the history of the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict/war. Date of original publication is provided below the author name in each article. Our articles provide snapshots of the situation in Sri Lanka between 1997 and 2019, and useful to anyone who wants to understand what happened in Sri Lanka in those fateful years.

We think that the conflict will continue in one form or another, for a separate country or for equal treatment within a federal country, until the minority Tamils feel they are not treated as second class citizens, not economically exploited and their language and culture are respected and protected.

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1. Dichotomy of Sri Lankan Foreign Policy

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: January 2001]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Introduction
2. Sri Lanka and Britain
3. Sri Lanka and the United Nations
4. Mediation for Peace or Weapons for War?
5. A Request to Foreign Governments

Abbreviations

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

UN - United Nations

1. Introduction

There is a dichotomy in Sri Lankan Government foreign affairs. The Sri Lankan Government wants to eat the cake and have it all in the plate too. They do not want foreign countries to make any suggestions or offer any opinion on how to resolve peacefully the decades long war between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil freedom fighters, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It claims that the war is an internal conflict and wants no foreign interference.

At the very same time, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister is going around the globe asking foreign governments for help in winning the war against the LTTE. They want countries around the world to ban LTTE and alleged LTTE-front organizations from operating from their soil. Sri Lankan Government also wants foreign nations to help them militarily by way of arms, ammunition and training to win the war. When some 30,000 Sri Lankan soldiers were almost encircled by LTTE fighters in the largest Tamil City of Jaffna in April-May 2000, Sri Lankan President pleaded with major and minor powers to help rescue the soldiers by evacuating them or by sending advanced weapons of war urgently on an emergency basis to the almost encircled soldiers.

The Sri Lankan Government cannot assert that the war is an internal matter and at the same time seek international help to win the war. It cannot get angry when another nation makes a suggestion on how to settle the war peacefully, and at the same time seek military and economic aid to defeat the minority Tamil freedom fighters, the LTTE. If foreign countries have no right to voice their opinion on how to end the war peacefully, Sri Lanka has no right to seek military and financial help from foreign countries to end

the war by defeating the LTTE either. Let us discuss a couple of examples of the Sri Lankan dichotomy in this respect.

2. Sri Lanka and Britain

Speaking at the British Council in Colombo (Sri Lankan capital) on November 22, 2000, **British Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain** said,

"The LTTE need to acknowledge that, whilst a Tamil Kingdom constitutionally split from the rest of the island will not receive recognition by Europe, the USA (United States of America) or indeed India, the principle of self-determination and control over most if not all the key policies affecting daily life would be supported by the international community."

This reasonable suggestion set the Sri Lankan Government into a sort of temper tantrum. The usually mild-mannered Sri Lankan **Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar** responded angrily thus:

"We will make it clear to the British Government that we do not welcome such statements. As the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka I do not welcome statements made by people outside the country, even though they come from very friendly countries, prescribing remedies for our problem".

At the very same time that he was chiding the British Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain to stay out of making suggestions on how to end the war peacefully without further bloodshed, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister was asking Britain to ban LTTE there. Since the British Government did not comply immediately but is studying the situation, the Sri Lankan government went on a temper tantrum again. Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said that, "it will put a considerable strain on relations between Britain and Sri Lanka if the British government chose, for whatever reason, not to proscribe (ban) the LTTE".

If Sri Lanka does "**not welcome statements from people outside the country**" about how to resolve its war with the LTTE peacefully, what right does it have to insist that outside countries help it win the war by banning LTTE in their soil? If friendly countries cannot suggest "remedies for its problems (the war)", what right has Sri Lanka has to ask these friendly countries to arm and train its army to win the war? This is the dichotomy of Sri Lankan foreign policy. It wants Britain's help in winning the war but it does not want Britain to make constructive suggestions on how to end the war through a negotiated settlement.

3. Sri Lanka and the United Nations

Not only is Sri Lanka totally opposed to any UN role in resolving the war in Sri Lanka peacefully, it is also opposed in principle to any humanitarian intervention by the United Nations anywhere in the world even when the government brutally oppresses and

massacres minorities (as it happened in East Timor and Bosnia). In September of 1999, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told journalists in New York, "Many of us are against the UN getting involved in internal questions of states". Kadirgamar warned that though no one could stand by in the face of gross abuse of human rights, circumvention of the UN Charter "is never a good thing, whatever the magnitude, the scale and the moral content of the human rights violations may be". But at the same time, the same Kadirgamar was lobbying UN to ban LTTE in UN member countries because he alleges that LTTE is a terrorist organization killing civilians. In other words, Sri Lankan army and air force can kill thousands of Tamil civilians and UN should look the other way but LTTE should be banned because he alleges that LTTE attacks killed some Sinhalese civilians.

In September 1999 United Nations expressed deep concern over civilian casualties in Sri Lankan Air Force bombing. According to reports, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar went livid at the UN statement. He said, **"UN should be more concerned with malaria and mosquitoes -- not domestic political issues"**. If so, why should UN ask member nations to ban the LTTE? Is Sri Lanka claiming that LTTE is spreading malaria and mosquitoes?

This, in summary, seems to be Sri Lankan policy towards the UN: The United Nations should help Sri Lankan military win the war by banning LTTE in member countries but the UN has no right to do anything, even express concern, over the thousands of civilian casualties and outright torture-rape-murders of Tamil civilians by Sri Lankan security forces.

4. Mediation for Peace or Weapons for War?

Sri Lanka insists that it does not want any foreign nation or individuals of impeccable integrity (including many impartial political and religious leaders and Nobel Prize winners who have volunteered their services) to mediate peace talks between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE. It says that the war is an internal affair to be resolved internally without foreign interference. If it is an internal war to be resolved internally, why is the Sri Lankan Government going around world capitals seeking financial aid, weapons of war and military training to win the war? Sri Lanka's motto seems to be, **"mediators for peace talks stay away, but military trainers for our army welcome."**

This is not a peace-loving government that is interested in resolving the conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority peacefully and justly but a war-mongering government that is interested in defeating the Tamils militarily and dictating unjust terms of peace. Well-meaning foreign governments should not be taken by Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge's talks of peace but take note of what she is doing.

5. A Request to Foreign Governments

So far some foreign governments have given the benefit of doubt, overlooked Sri Lanka's substantial human rights violations and helped its war efforts financially, militarily and diplomatically. Now it is time that they realize the war-mongering nature of the Sri Lankan Government and its goal of militarily defeating the Tamil freedom fighters and imposing an unfair settlement on the Tamil minority. The Sri Lankan government talks to the majority Sinhalese population of a military victory to end the war and talks to foreign governments of its interest in a negotiated settlement. Who is it lying to? To the Sinhalese population or to the world community? Its actions give the answer. It is pressing ahead with waging the war, turning down any and all suggestions for a negotiated settlement under foreign mediation although all peaceful resolutions of armed conflicts in recent years were the result of foreign mediation.

I request the well-meaning foreign nations to draw the line and give an ultimatum to Sri Lanka. Please tell the Sri Lankan Government to start peace talks with the LTTE under the mediation (not just facilitation) of Norway within two months. If the Sri Lankan Government does not engage in peace talks under the mediation of Norway in two months, stop all financial and military aid, including those already promised. Also, sanction an UN embargo on all military sales to Sri Lanka. Such international action is necessary to bring the Sri Lankan Government to the peace table and engage in serious negotiations to end the war and reach peace with honor, equality and justice for all.

The Sri Lankan Government used to say that foreign governments' action is necessary to bring LTTE to the peace table. LTTE has now committed itself publicly and firmly to peace talks. It is the Sri Lankan Government that is dancing around and procrastinating. So, applying the same logic, it is necessary to stop all financial and military aid to Sri Lanka and also impose an international military-sales embargo to bring the Sri Lankan Government to the peace table.

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2.

Place an Arms Embargo on Sri Lanka

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: May 2008]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Sri Lanka's Duplicity and Western Democracies
2. Who are the Financiers and Arms Suppliers?
3. It is Time for Western Democracies to Act
4. The Question of India

Abbreviations

BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation

EU - European Union

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

SAARC - South Asia Association of Regional Co-operation

UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council

USA - United States of America

1. Sri Lanka's Duplicity and Western Democracies

It is April 2008. By now the world knows that the Sri Lankan government has no intention of devolving reasonable powers to the Tamil minority (something the Tamils knew for decades). Until just a couple of years ago Sri Lankan government ministers and diplomats were going around the world telling them that they want to "soften" the LTTE militarily to force LTTE to agree to a reasonable solution to the ethnic conflict. Now we know that it was a lie and what the Sri Lankan government wanted was to destroy LTTE and impose a pax Sinhala rule over the Tamil minority.

Once the western democracies realized the Sri Lankan duplicity they stopped much of the financial aid. United States of America (USA) that gave some military assistance in the past also stopped much of it, hoping that the Sri Lankan government would stop its quest for a military solution and go to the peace table.

2. Who are the Financiers and Arms Suppliers?

Western democracies were not the only source of financial aid and weapons to Sri Lanka. In June 2007, faced with criticism from western democracies and cut in financial aid from them, Sri Lanka's defense secretary (and the president's brother) Gotabaya Rajapaksa said, "We won't be isolated. We have all the SAARC (South Asia Association of Regional Co-operation) countries, the Asian countries. Britain, or Western countries,

the EU (European Union) countries, they can do whatever. We don't depend on them. They are not giving anything."

Which Asian countries was Gotabaya Rajapaksa talking about? China is investing millions of dollars in infrastructure and industrial projects. Indian government is quietly pumping millions of dollars into Sri Lanka with no strings attached. India is also secretly, and sometimes openly, gifting weapons and training to Sri Lankan military. China and some Eastern European countries are selling weapons to Sri Lanka. Pakistan has emerged as a major arms seller to Sri Lanka.

Only thing that stands in the way of total subjugation of the Tamil minority as second class citizens for another half a century or more is the military strength of LTTE (the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam).

All news reports seem to indicate that LTTE is considerably weakened militarily. Yet they seem to put up stiff resistance against the Sri Lankan military making inroads into their territories in the north. A news item in an Indian newspaper on April 2, 2008 reported that Sri Lanka had ordered from Pakistan 150,000 rounds of 60 mm mortar ammunition for immediate delivery, in addition to \$25 million worth of 81 mm, 120 mm and 130 mm mortar ammunition to be delivered within a month.

3. It is Time for Western Democracies to Act

It is time for western democracies to act urgently before the Sri Lankan military destroys the only leverage the Tamil minority has, the armed strength of LTTE. Western democracies must act now, before there is no leverage at all and an unjust, unfair solution is imposed.

This is time for western democracies to act. **Those who gave an international safety net to the Sri Lankan government should now throw at least a lifeline to the Tamil minority.** We do not expect the United States of America (USA) or the European Union (EU) to send troops to protect the Tamil minority as they did in Kosovo. All we ask is, "please put an arms embargo on Sri Lanka" on an emergency basis. This should be done now without delay, before the Sri Lankan military acquires large supplies of arms and ammunition. May be, may be, then the Sri Lankan government would see that it could not score a decisive military victory over the LTTE and agree to a honourable political solution.

When we say arms embargo, we do not mean that western democracies should not sell or give arms and ammunition to Sri Lanka, we mean a total international arms embargo, prohibiting any country from selling or giving arms and ammunition to Sri Lanka. We know that it may take considerable effort to persuade the United Nations (UN) Security Council to go along with an embargo. But efforts should be made to that end. In the meantime America and European Union should persuade countries like Pakistan and Ukraine to stop the sale of weapons to Sri Lanka.

4. The Question of India

Unlike the western democracies, India is not impartial in the Sri Lankan conflict. Its position is anti-Tamil; India's actions are evidence of that. **While western democracies are trying to douse the war fire in Sri Lanka, India is pouring oil into the fire by way of financial aid, military training and hardware.** While western democracies cut their financial aid to Sri Lanka substantially, India increased it. While America stopped much of its military supplies to Sri Lanka, India is continuing to supply it. In the same way India opposed a European Union sponsored human rights resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2006, it would lobby against an arms embargo too. Western democracies should ignore it and act quickly before it is too late. In the same way the west helped Kosovo in spite of objection from some of its neighbors, they should ignore Indian objections and proceed with an arms embargo.

Short of sending troops to protect the Tamil minority (which is not going to happen) or provide arms to LTTE (unlikely), only option the international community has is to place an arms embargo and thus put an end to the war and move to the peace table.

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3. International Community Should Protect Tamil Civilians in War-Torn Sri Lanka

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: May 2009]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. No-Fire Zones and IDP Camps
2. A Two-Phased Approach to Protect Tamil Civilians
3. Phase1: Protection of Tamil Civilians in the No-Fire Zone and IDP Camps
 - 3.1 Evacuation of the No-Fire Zone
 - 3.2 Protection of Tamil People in Sri Lankan IDP Camps
 - 3.3 Safety Net for Sinhalese, Protective Cover for Tamils
4. Phase 2: Peaceful Resolution and Normalization

Abbreviations

IDP - Internally Displaced People (people who are refugees in their own country)

NFZ - No-fire zone

UN - United Nations

USA - United States of America

1. No-Fire Zones and IDP Camps

Over quarter million Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka are under grave risk. Some of them are in the so-called "no-fire zones (NFZ)" or "safe zones" declared by the Sri Lankan government and the rest are in the so-called "welfare villages" or IDP camps set up by the Sri Lankan government. [IDP - Internally Displaced People]

It is well documented by international humanitarian organizations that the Sri Lankan army shells indiscriminately at the no-fire zone where over 100,000 Tamil civilians live under crowded conditions in about 20 square kilometers. Even the hospital in the NFZ is shelled repeatedly by the Sri Lankan military. There is severe shortage of food and medicine too to make things even worse.

Tamil civilians who come out of the NFZ into Sri Lankan military controlled areas are put into what the government calls "welfare villages" surrounded by barbed wire fences. Except for a few elderly and sick, no one else is allowed to leave these "welfare villages". It is essentially an open prison for about 250,000 Tamil civilians coming out of the NFZ. Sri Lankan government has drawn a black curtain around these welfare villages with no access to anyone except for a few relatives (key phrase is "a few"). Reporters and

international humanitarian groups were not allowed access at all except in a few guided tours by government officials.

Human Rights Watch reported of "drastic shortage" of food, shelter, water and sanitation supplies in these camps. It added that people [Tamil civilians] are "held indefinitely in army-run prison camps". It also said, "The government's 'welfare centers' for civilians are just badly disguised prisons." One international aid official likened these camps to Nazi concentration camps.

Also, God only knows how many **Tamil men and women are tortured and murdered** by security personnel in the name of interrogations, and how many **Tamil women and girls are raped** simply for the amusement of Sri Lankan Sinhala soldiers, paramilitary and police. We know of abductions and disappearances of Tamils in the capital city Colombo in broad light and no prosecution of personnel involved. Rape of Tamil women abducted at security posts and in prisons also been reported over the years. With total blackout of what is happening inside these welfare villages, God only knows how many have suffered rape, torture and murder. There is no openness; there is no accounting to what goes on in these internment camps called "welfare villages". [More information on the situation in the no-fire zone and in the IDP camps may be found on the Internet from unbiased international media and human rights groups.]

2. A Two-Phased Approach to Protect Tamil Civilians

This proposal consists of a two-pronged first phase to be implemented immediately and a second phase to be implemented within a year. First phase deals with the immediate need for protection of Tamil civilians in the no-fire zone and IDP camps. This two pronged approach consists of: (1) Evacuation of people in the no-fire zone to camps run by United Nations, (2) Take over of the IDP camps run by the Sri Lankan government by United Nations in order to protect the Tamils there. The two prongs should happen simultaneously. The second phase deals with a peace settlement and return of Tamil civilians from the United Nations camps to their villages. The second phase should be implemented within a year. These camps should not become semi-permanent for decades.

3. Phase1: Protection of Tamil Civilians in the No-Fire Zone and IDP Camps

3.1 Evacuation of the No-Fire Zone

There were reports a few weeks ago of evacuation of the no-fire zone by American military, and moving the people to IDP camps run by Sri Lankan government. There was reportedly opposition from the Indian government of American (USA) involvement. This writer is supportive of the evacuation of the no-fire zone by America provided the evacuated people are moved to a camp outside Sri Lanka for a year. How can we evacuate people from the horrors of the no-fire zone and send them to the horrors of the IDP camps run by Sri Lankan government? It is like taking something from the frying pan and putting it in boiling water.

A suitable location for such a camp is Tamil Nadu in southern India. The camp must be run by United Nations and the people in the camp should be under UN protection and care. Also, the camp should be for a duration of one year only and western democracies should take responsibility for bringing about a peace settlement within one year so people can return to their own villages and rebuild their homes and lives under funding from the international community through humanitarian agencies. (More about a peaceful settlement is discussed in Section 4.)

3.2 Protection of Tamil People in Sri Lankan IDP Camps

As discussed in Section 1, Tamils in Sri Lankan IDP camps not only live in squalid conditions but the young Tamil men and women are in grave danger from Sri Lankan soldiers, paramilitary and police. United Nations should immediately take total control of these camps and people in these camps should come under the direct care and protection of United Nations. In Bosnia there were camps under UN protection although Bosnian Serb military did enter the camp and took some civilians away. The entire Kosovo came under the protection of NATO forces because of the grave danger to Kosovo residents from Yugoslavian army. If the Sri Lankan government has legitimate reasons to question (interrogate) anyone, Sri Lankan security could be given access. Interrogations should be conducted in the presence of international observers and those suspected of crimes should be tried in open courts with access to media. This is the only way we can expect justice and fair play for Tamils in Vanni.

3.3 Safety Net for Sinhalese, Protective Cover for Tamils

We do know that Sri Lankan government would not transfer control of these IDP camps to United Nations willingly. Extreme pressure would be needed. We thought that Nazi concentration camps were the last of its kind at the end of the Second World War. Then we saw on television a glimpse of the horrors of the Bosnian concentration camps. A glimpse of the skeletal bodies of men in those camps and bodies of murdered young Bosnian men in secret mass graves. Western public was appalled by these images, the governments acted and finally the nightmare of internment camps and secret mass graves ended.

No video footage of Sri Lankan IDP camps seems to be available because Sri Lanka had closed the camps to the rest of the world. Yet, based on Sri Lankan security forces' past record and the limited knowledge of "disappearances" that occur even today in Tamil areas of Colombo and Jaffna, we can extrapolate the horrors of these IDP camps. When there is forest fire in a remote jungle, trees get burnt down even if there was no one to see and report. Rapes, tortures and murders do occur in the IDP camps even if there are no outside witnesses to report.

The international community gave a "safety net" to the Sri Lankan government at the beginning of the 2002 ceasefire, now **it should at least provide a "protective cover" for the Tamils in IDP camps.**

4. Phase 2: Peaceful Resolution and Normalization

International community, especially western democracies, should take responsibility to bring about a peaceful resolution that will allow Tamil people to run their own affairs with safety and dignity. After all, this was what America, European Union and others who started the peace process in 2002 promised. Peace talks should be time-limited (one year?) and conducted under third party mediation (not facilitation). We want to point out that Tamil people wanted Norway to act as mediators in 2002 but it was the Sri Lankan government that opposed it and agreed to a watered-down facilitation. Northern Ireland peace talks or Kosovo talks could be a model. The settlement must be ratified by the people of northeastern Sri Lanka by vote. It is the oppressed minority that should ratify the settlement and not the majority community that may want to keep the hegemony over the minority.

I pray to God that peace reigns in Sri Lanka soon and the minority Tamil community that has suffered so much in the past decades can live in peace with honour.

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4. A Plea to the International Community on Sri Lanka

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: November 2006]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Background

1.1 Firepower

1.2 An International Safety Net to the Sri Lankan Government

1.3 LTTE Ban in Canada and the European Union

2. Sri Lanka Attempts a Military Solution

3. Starvations, Murders and All Types of Human Rights Violations

4. What can the International Community Do?

4.1 Three Options

4.2 The "Ten-Year" Solution

4.3 The "No-Fly-Zone" Solution

4.4 Strengthen LTTE

Abbreviations

EU - European Union

IC - International Community

JHU - Jathika Hela Urumaya (an extremist Buddhist party)

JVP - Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (a Marxist Sinhalese party)

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

SLMM - Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission

UN - United Nations

USA - United States of America

1. Background

1.1 Firepower

After over four years of ceasefire, war has started in Sri Lanka between the Sri Lankan military (representing essentially the interests of the Sinhala majority) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (protecting the interests of the Tamil minority). At the time the ceasefire started at the closing days of 2001, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), having won many battles in the preceding year, seemed to have a military edge. Sri Lankan military increased its firepower substantially during the ceasefire, especially in aerial bombing capabilities. Although both sides acquired weapons and ammunition during the ceasefire, LTTE had to purchase them clandestinely and bring them to the country surreptitiously. Sri Lanka acquired them openly as well as covertly. Obviously

Sri Lanka seemed to have acquired considerably more firepower than the LTTE. The LTTE might also have lost some of its naval assets during the 2004 tsunami. The Sri Lankan military had always vastly outnumbered the LTTE in manpower and firepower, but now it has reached proportions that made Sri Lanka think that it could impose a military solution to the ethnic problem.

1.2 An International Safety Net to the Sri Lankan Government

The fact that Sri Lanka was increasing its firepower was no secret; it was in newspapers. LTTE, knowing the details of its own acquisitions, knew that Sri Lankan military was using the ceasefire period to get a substantial edge in firepower. Any military force in such a situation would strike before the other side gains a decided military advantage. LTTE did not. Why?

Why did the LTTE watch without striking even as the Sri Lankan military was increasing its firepower multifold? Answer: "The International Safety Net to the Sri Lankan Military". The international community (IC), essentially America and the European Union (EU), had given assurances to the Sri Lankan Government that if the LTTE were to break the ceasefire they would come to its rescue (most likely through military training and advanced weapons). For example, on January 10, 2006, U.S. ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead said, "if the LTTE chooses to abandon peace ... we want it to be clear, they will face a stronger, more capable and more determined Sri Lankan military." Thus Sri Lanka amassed firepower under an "international safety net", promising the international community that it would not seek a military solution.

The international community gave Sri Lanka the "safety net" or the "military cover" because of the perception that LTTE could not be trusted to hold on to the ceasefire but Sri Lanka could be. Recent events clearly showed the world that that trust was misplaced. It was Sri Lanka that started the war, or at the least escalated local incidents into full-scale war, according to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM).

1.3 LTTE Ban in Canada and the European Union

Even as it was increasing its firepower, Sri Lanka successfully persuaded Canada and the European Union (EU) to ban LTTE, in spite of contrary advice from the peace facilitator Norway and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. This dried up, at least partly, LTTE funds for acquiring weapons. This put LTTE into a double jam: on the one hand Sri Lanka was on a shopping binge for weapons; on the other hand its own ability to purchase weapons was curtailed.

2. Sri Lanka Attempts a Military Solution

Ever since the start of the peace talks in 2002, Sri Lanka had promised the international community that it would not re-start the war and seek a military solution to the ethnic conflict. It had also told the international community that it would offer a just solution to Tamil grievances. It was under these promises that the international community offered

Sri Lanka the "safety net"; Canadian and European Union ban on LTTE was also based on these promises. **Sri Lanka had obtained all it could get from the international community: the safety net and the LTTE ban.** Sri Lanka needed nothing more from the international community. Now it can ignore the international community and go for a military solution to the ethnic conflict; a military victory over LTTE that the newly elected President Mahinda Rajapaksa promised its electoral allies JVP and JHU. The Sri Lankan publication Sunday Leader reported in December 2005 that the President told JVP and JHU that he was playing for time [going along with the peace process] because it would take at least three months to acquire necessary firepower to go to war with the LTTE. True to his word, ignoring repeated requests from donor co-chairs (USA, European Union, Japan and Norway), President Rajapaksa started the war and is continuing with it. Obviously the President thinks that he could defeat the LTTE and impose a Pax Sinhala solution on the Tamil minority, **reneging on his repeated promises to the donor co-chairs that he would not seek a military solution.**

3. Starvations, Murders and All Types of Human Rights Violations

The Sri Lankan government is engaged in a systematic program of denying relief (food, medicine) to the Tamil civilians trapped in the war. It closed the key land route bringing relief to the largest Tamil city in the island. It put severe restrictions on which aid agencies can work in Tamil areas. The military murdered 17 aid workers in cold blood to frighten away others from providing relief to Tamil civilians. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission ruled that the military carried out the murders.

Please do not allow continued starvations, murders, and all types of human rights violations tantamount to genocide in Sri Lanka. The only way to prevent it is to give a safety net to the Tamil people. Read what happened in the past anti-Tamil programs of 1956, 1958 and 1983. **Read the heart wrenching accounts of rapes, tortures, mutilations and murders the Tamil people suffered.** Interested readers may search the Internet for details. We will simply give a quote from Mr. Natanel Lorch, Israeli Charge d' Affaires to Sri Lanka (1958-1960):

"In Sri Lanka, in 1958, programs were committed against Tamils, barely reported in the western media, but on a scale and with a brutality which compare to the worst in the annals of the Jewish people."

1958 is not the worst of the anti-Tamil programs. 1983 was. Unspeakable crimes were committed against the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

4. What can the International Community Do?

4.1 Three Options

What can the donor co-chairs (America, European Union, Japan and Norway) and other well-meaning nations do to deny a Sri Lankan military victory and the consequences to follow. Stopping financial aid would not move Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan government and the

extremist Buddhist monks would rather starve its own Sinhala population than grant the Tamil minority their legitimate rights.

The author sees three options before the international community. These options are listed below in the order of effectiveness.

The "Ten-Year" Solution
The "No-Fly-Zone" Solution
Strengthen LTT

4.2 The "Ten-Year" Solution

Former SLMM monitor General Mikko Klemetti of Finland offered a solution during an interview in October 2006. General Mikko Klemetti's solution is as follows:

- (1) International community should send a peacekeeping force of at least 15000 to the northeastern region of Sri Lanka.
- (2) Clearly demarcate the Tamil and Sinhala areas in the island.
- (3) Give economic support to both areas.
- (4) Allow the people to decide their future after five to ten years.

This sounds as a reasonable and just solution. However, is the international community willing to commit 15000 armed soldiers for the next ten years? [Note: Pakistan and India should not contribute to the peace keeping force because of their past military involvement in Sri Lanka.]

4.3 The "No-Fly-Zone" Solution

Sri Lanka's military advantage, and thus its eagerness to seek a military solution, comes primarily from its air power. International community may negate it by enforcing a "no-fly-zone" over the northeastern region; this should bring Sri Lanka to look for a solution through mediated peace talks.

LTTE should be told publicly and in no uncertain terms that the no-fly zone would be provided only as long as it does not go into offensive actions beyond the 2002 ceasefire lines.

4.4 Strengthen LTTE

If the international community can neither commit a 15000 strong peacekeeping force for ten years nor provide a no-fly zone over the northeastern region, then it has to strengthen LTTE to balance the increased firepower of the Sri Lankan military. America had said that if LTTE were to break the ceasefire and seek a military solution they would face a stronger and more capable Sri Lankan military (see U.S. ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead's statement in Section 1.2). Now it is time to turn the coin and say publicly that if the Sri Lankan military were to continue with the war, it would soon face a stronger LTTE. It

may make Sri Lankan President Rajapakse think twice before defying the international community and continuing with its war.

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5. International Community Should Balance the Military Equation in Sri Lanka (2006)

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: December 2006]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. International Community Acted with Good Intentions
2. The Flawed Hypothesis
3. International Safety Net for Sri Lankan Military
4. European Ban on LTTE
5. Why Did the International Community Trust Sri Lankan Government?
6. Sri Lankan President Betrays the Trust
7. What Can the International Community Do?

Abbreviations

CFA - Ceasefire agreement

EU - European Union

IC - International community

JHU - Jathika Hela Urumaya (an extremist Buddhist party)

JVP - Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (a Marxist Sinhalese party)

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

USA - United States of America

1. International Community Acted with Good Intentions

[When we talk of the actions of the international community, we are primarily talking of the actions of the co-chairs of donor nations, namely, the European Union (EU), Japan, Norway and the United States of America (USA), who represent 58 donor countries.]

International community (IC) did not get much involved in the bloody Sri Lankan ethnic conflict until the 2002 ceasefire agreement (CFA). The international community had nothing but good intentions in Sri Lanka. They have not much vested interest in Sri Lanka other than a stable, peaceful Sri Lanka where the Tamil minority is treated equal to the majority Sinhalese. IC had said that in its various statement at different junctures. For example,

"... there are legitimate issues that are raised by the Tamil community and they have a very legitimate desire, as anybody would, to be able to control their own lives, to rule their own destinies and to govern themselves in their homeland; in the areas they've

traditionally inhabited [within a united Sri Lanka]" - U.S. Assistant Secretary of State **Richard Boucher** (US State Department Release, June 2, 2006)

Although the international community had good intentions, it made all its decisions on the basis of a flawed hypothesis. Unfortunately those decisions and the resulting actions had a deadly effect on the Tamil population.

2. The Flawed Hypothesis

International community's decisions and actions were based on the wrong belief that the Sri Lankan Government could be trusted but the Tamil freedom fighters, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), could not be trusted. The IC believed that the LTTE could not be trusted to respect the 2002 ceasefire agreement; sooner or later it would break it and re-start the war. The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, could be trusted to honor its pledge that it would not restart the war and seek a military solution. The flawed nature of this belief would become evident as events unfolded in 2006. It was the LTTE that was eager to keep the ceasefire alive and it was the Sri Lankan Government that would not end its aerial bombings and other offensives in spite of repeated requests from the international community.

3. International Safety Net for Sri Lankan Military

It was because of that flawed hypothesis that the international community offered a "safety net" to the Sri Lankan military; if LTTE were to break the ceasefire and re-start the war, the international community (essentially America) would train and arm the Sri Lankan military so that LTTE would lose the war.

"If the LTTE chooses to abandon peace ... we want it to be clear, they will face a stronger, more capable and more determined Sri Lankan military." - U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka **Jeffrey Lunstead**, January 10, 2006.

While the international community was totally distrustful of LTTE, it totally trusted Sri Lanka Government's pledge that it would not break the ceasefire and seek a military solution to the ethnic conflict. Even as the newly elected Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa told his electoral allies, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP - a Marxist Sinhalese party) and Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU - an extremist Buddhist party) in December 2005,

"The army does not have sophisticated, modern firepower to crush the LTTE. So **I am trying to play for time** because it will take at least three months to acquire the necessary firepower to begin the onslaught against the LTTE. The new army commander is researching and collecting the necessary data on the strength, firepower and fighting capabilities of the LTTE. After that, we can make necessary arrangements to be prepared for war"

The international community thought that it was a politician saying what his allies wanted to hear and nothing more. The co-chairs representing the 58 donor countries (the European Union (EU), Japan, Norway and the United States of America (USA)) gave the president the benefit of the doubt. After all, President Mahinda Rajapakse has given his solemn word to the diplomats visiting Colombo that he would not opt for a military solution. The international community (IC) trusted him even as he sent his military officers shopping around for offensive military weapons. IC thought that a stronger Sri Lankan military would be a deterrent for LTTE opting for the path of war. It thought that a stronger Sri Lankan military would assure a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict. Again, the co-chairs reached this wrong conclusion on the basis of the flawed hypothesis that the Sri Lankan government could be trusted to keep its assurances to the IC but the LTTE could not be trusted. Unfortunately, events that unfolded in Sri Lanka in 2006 showed that a stronger Sri Lankan military meant the Sri Lankan government opting for a military solution.

4. European Ban on LTTE

European ban on the LTTE in 2006 was also based on the selfsame flawed hypothesis: Put more pressure on LTTE and weaken it; they would not re-start the war. What the European Union (EU) did not seem to foresee was that the Sri Lankan government would re-start the war if it believed that LTTE was sufficiently weakened. There were at least two discerning voices in the international community. One was Norwegian diplomats facilitating the peace talks. The other was the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) monitoring the ceasefire.

Former Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) head, **Retired Brigadier General Ulf Henricsson**, said that the European Union ban on LTTE meant the Sri Lankan government thought it had "carte blanche" to take on the LTTE. He added, "I would say it's a mistake, it was a wrong decision" (August 25, 2006).

5. Why Did the International Community Trust Sri Lankan Government?

Why did the international community (IC) put so much trust on the Sri Lankan government and totally distrusted the LTTE? It is easier to trust someone who is like you. Sri Lankan diplomats, ministers, prime minister and president are "like the" diplomats and decision makers of the international community. They are well educated, spoke English and knew the nuances of diplomacy. It is easy to trust someone you know; someone who is like you.

Very few decision makers have met LTTE leaders. They are constantly demonized by the Sri Lankan government and even at times, unwittingly, by foreign press. Most of the LTTE leaders in Wanni (Vanni) are far less educated, spoke hesitant English and not sophisticated diplomats. It is easy to think of them as bloodthirsty barbarians who would never stick to the ceasefire.

Events in 2006 have clearly shown that such on-the-face impressions could be wrong. Events show that it is the LTTE that wants to continue with the ceasefire and it is the Sri Lankan government that is determined to continue with the war, seek a military victory and enforce a Pax Sinhala solution.

6. Sri Lankan President Betrays the Trust

The international community had made a mistake in trusting the Sri Lankan government, offering it a "one-sided" safety net thus allowing it a freehand to increase its firepower, and possibly weakening LTTE through the European Union and Canadian ban in 2006. It is an understandable mistake. The international community did what it did with good intentions - a just, peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict in which "the Tamil community would be able to control their own lives, to rule their own destinies and to govern themselves in their homeland; in the areas they've traditionally inhabited [within a united Sri Lanka]" as stated by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher (US State Department Release, June 2, 2006).

But it backfired. Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa who seemed so sincere in seeking a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict has now shown his real face to the international community (a face that the Tamil people are very familiar). Discarding all pledges and assurances he had given to the donor co-chairs, the European Union (EU), Japan, Norway and the United States of America (USA), he had chosen the path of war. Once he got what he needed from the international community (ban on LTTE, a safety net for the military while it increased firepower), he had opted for war as he promised his political allies in December 2006 (see Section 3).

"It is important to be clear that the purpose of our [military] assistance [to Sri Lankan government] is not to encourage a return to war." - U.S. Assistant Secretary of State **Richard Boucher** (June 2006).

But that is exactly what has happened. Sri Lankan government had returned to war.

7. What Can the International Community Do?

Please do not allow continued starvations, murders, and all types of human rights violations tantamount to genocide in Sri Lanka. The only way to prevent it is to give a safety net to the Tamil people. Offer it now and offer it firmly. Please tell the Sri Lankan government that the war **MUST** stop now, respect the 2002 ceasefire agreement (CFA) and return to talks with Norwegian mediation. If the Sri Lankan government continues with its military course, the international community must make sure that the Sri Lankan military loses the war that it was so eager to re-start.

U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka Jeffrey Lunstead said on January 10, 2006, "If the LTTE chooses to abandon peace ... we want it to be clear, they will face a stronger, more capable and more determined Sri Lankan military."

Now **please tell Sri Lankan government** in no uncertain terms,
"If the Sri Lankan government chooses to abandon peace ... we want it to be clear, they will face a stronger, more capable and more determined Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam."

At the time the **European Union** (EU) banned LTTE it said,
"The EU will keep the situation in Sri Lanka under active review, taking account of the activities of all parties to the conflict... It will remain ready to adopt further measures as and when they may be warranted by changing circumstances."

Circumstances have changed drastically. While campaigning for the ban, the Sri Lankan government promised the international community that it would continue with the peace talks with LTTE. **See what it says now.**

"The international position on negotiations with the LTTE can best be described as seemingly contradictory" - Sri Lankan Ambassador to USA Bernard Goonetilleke (November 8, 2006)

Sri Lankan governments position, attitude and demeanor about a negotiated settlement has changed in spite of its lip service to peace talks. European Union should warn Sri Lanka that if it continues with the war, the ban would be lifted temporarily. Even if the removal of the ban does not end the war, other measures to return to the military balance that existed at the time of the 2002 ceasefire agreement should be taken. For example, impose a "no-fly-zone" over the northeast thus negating Sri Lanka's air superiority that tilts the military balance in its favor. If it is not practical to send a few fighter planes to impose the "no-fly-zone", I am certain that NATO and US military experts could find some way to balance the military equation to force the Sri Lankan government to stop its offensives and return to negotiations in sincerity. Diplomatic pressures, press releases, resolutions and even economic sanctions would not end the war. Only the balancing of the military power would persuade Sri Lanka that a military solution is not an option.

International community has a responsibility and, in fact, an obligation to protect the Tamil people from the Sri Lankan military onslaught and also assure that their legitimate grievances are addressed satisfactorily. First stop the war and then ask the Sri Lankan government to accept Norwegian mediation for future talks.

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6. Why India, Pakistan, China and America are all Arming the Sri Lankan Military Against Minority Tamils?

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: January 2008]

[This article is also included in the free e-books "India and the Battle for Tamil Eelam" and "United States of America and the Battle for Tamil Eelam" because of its relevance there also.]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Introduction
2. Myth of an Umbilical Relationship Between Sri Lankan Tamils and India
3. Sri Lankan Tamils Look to India
4. Why no one is Helping the Tamil Minority?

Abbreviations

ACSA - Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

USA - United States of America

1. Introduction

India, Pakistan, China and America are all helping the Sri Lankan military against the minority Tamil rebels, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It is unusual and, in fact, unnatural for all these countries to arm the same side in a civil war.

India and Pakistan are archenemies from the very day of their births on August 15, 1947. They have fought three major wars and there are ongoing border skirmishes. India is also accusing Pakistan of helping Kashmiri fighters and assisting in terrorist bomb attacks in India. It is thus natural for these two countries to help opposing sides in a war in their neighbourhood. Yet both are arming and training the Sri Lankan military in this war.

India and China may not be enemies but they surely are rivals for influence in the Indian Ocean region. In normal circumstances they would be supporting opposing sides in the Sri Lankan war. Yet both are providing weapons to Sri Lankan military; India is mostly giving them as gift and China is mostly selling them (like Pakistan).

India and United States of America (USA) are not enemies either. But they both have strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and Sri Lanka. In spite of its professed friendship with America, India jealously "guards" Sri Lanka from American influence. It was

reported in South Asian newspapers that it was India's disapproval that held up signing of the "Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA)" between Sri Lanka and USA for over four years (July 2002 - March 2007). In a separate incident, in late 2007, India was reportedly unhappy over Sri Lanka allowing America to install a RADAR system to monitor LTTE movements; India fears that America would also use the RADAR to spy on its military moves in southern India.

In spite of their enmity or rivalry with India, these countries--Pakistan, China and United States of America--support and assist the same side as India in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. Why? These countries think that even if they help the Tamil minority, once successful, the Tamils would "dump them" and side with India because of the umbilical relationship they "supposedly" have with India. What make them think so?

2. Myth of an Umbilical Relationship Between Sri Lankan Tamils and India

The umbilical relationship that Sri Lankan Tamils have is with the Tamil Nadu Tamils, and not with India as such. Let me elaborate.

There are about 60 million Tamils in the Indian Union, primarily in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. They are of the same ethnic origin, speak the same language and have the same culture as Sri Lankan Tamils. Tamils are less than 10% of the Indian population. The rest of India speaks a dozen or so major languages. The largest group is the Hindi speakers of north India. They constitute about 40% of the population. Although they do not have a majority in the Indian parliament, Hindi politicians dominate Indian government policy making by allying with willing, and often power-hungry, politicians from other regions [See Reference 1 for details].

Political parties from Tamilnadu have been allying with Hindi-dominated political parties and sharing power at the Indian central government for almost two decades. Yet when it comes to Sri Lanka, decisions are made by Hindi politicians even if they go against the sentiments of their allies in Tamilnadu. Power hungry Tamil politicians look the other way even as the Indian Government carries out decidedly anti-Tamil policies in the Sri Lankan ethnic war. Any expression of disagreement with Indian policies on Sri Lanka would result in "anti-Indian" and "anti-national" labels, and possible removal from ministerial positions at the central government and dismissal of the state government (even if the party came to power with a overwhelming majority in Tamil Nadu).

In short, although there is a blood bond, an umbilical relationship between Sri Lankan Tamils and Tamil Nadu Tamils, that bond--that special relationship--does not extend to the north or to the Indian government. To think that the Indian government has a special relationship, a kin feeling with Sri Lankan Tamils, and would come to their aide is wrong thinking. Events of the past two decades are evidence enough. It has nothing to do with the 1991 assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a Sri Lankan Tamil lady. India's anti-Tamil actions in Sri Lanka pre-date the assassination [Reference 2].

3. Sri Lankan Tamils Look to India

The unfortunate fact is that many Sri Lankan Tamils including many of their leaders of all political hue and colour seem to think that one day their knight in shining armour would come riding from New Delhi and save them. They think that their only possible help is from India and do not look for help elsewhere. In spite of India's help to the Sri Lankan government militarily, financially and diplomatically, many Sri Lankan Tamil people and leaders swear their eternal allegiance and love for India. They hope against hope that, may be, may be, their oft-repeated statements of love and loyalty might bring some help from India. That is not to be. India continues to provide military, financial and diplomatic assistance to Sri Lanka in its war against the Tamil minority. This writer is of the opinion that India would never help Sri Lankan Tamils achieve their legitimate rights. India's actions during the past two and a half decades are indicative of this.

4. Why no one is Helping the Tamil Minority?

Tamil leaders' **oft-repeated recitals of love and loyalty to India** are not only heard in the Indian capital New Delhi, they are also heard in the capitals of Pakistan, China and America. Policy makers in those capitals reach the logical conclusion that even if they were to help the Tamils now, if they were to achieve their legitimate rights because of that help, they would go back to India once their problems are solved. So they shy away from offering any help to the Tamil minority. Instead they compete to provide military assistance to the Sri Lankan government, hoping to have at least some influence in Sri Lanka.

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7.

International Community, Terrorism, War Crimes and Human Rights in Sri Lanka

(The Story of Guard Dogs and Mad Dogs)

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: September 2009]

[This story was written in August 2009 and reflects the then situation in Sri Lanka after the defeat of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Eelam War IV; international community involvement, terrorism, war crimes and human rights in Sri Lankan Tamil-Sinhala ethnic conflict.]

Once there was a peaceful village where lived a family: parents and two grown sons with their own families. They lived in adjacent houses in a small piece of land; everything was well. Parents died. The older brother started stealing fruits, coconuts and vegetables from the younger brother's backyard. When the younger brother and family asked him to stop the stealing, the older brother and his family beat them and intimidated them.

Then the younger brother bought a puppy and trained it to be a guard dog. It got quite good at guarding the house and backyard. When the older brother came to steal, the dog chased him away even biting him a few times. Older brother tried to beat the dog, stone the dog, kill the dog, but to no avail. The dog has grown stronger and experienced in guarding the house and yard. It was quite aggressive but chased away or bit only those who entered the yard without an invitation. It was no threat to anybody else.

Then something bad happened in a village several miles away. There came a mad, rabid dog and it bit a man seriously. Residents of that village were angry, they shot and wounded the rabid dog and it ran away. Our stealing older brother heard of what happened in the other village. He went to those people and told them that there is a mad dog in his village too and is menacing him and others. He asked for their help in killing that dog. The people believed him and mistook the guard dog for a mad dog. They lent him their gun. He took the gun, went home and shot and disabled younger brother's guard dog.

He was now again free to steal from the younger brother. Any protest or resistance was met with violent beating. People from the other village saw what was happening and asked the older brother to stop the stealing and beatings. He went on a tirade against them and asked them not to interfere in the affairs of his neighborhood. "Didn't you shoot and wound the mad dog in your street?", he asked them, sweeping aside the fact that they shot a mad dog and not a guard dog.

What should the people who unwittingly helped disable the guard dog and paved the way for continued oppression of the younger brother do? Should they come and stand guard of the younger brother's house? That may not be practical; they have their own village to

guard and protect. Should they buy a new puppy and train it to be a guard dog? Should they build a permanent, solid wall between the brothers' properties?

Or, is the younger brother to be forever at the mercy of the older brother, stolen and beaten?

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8.

Try the Sri Lankan Trio for War Crimes in Western Courts

(Tamil-Sinhala Ethnic War of 2009)

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa and General Sarath Fonseka

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: August 2009]

Abbreviations

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

PTK - Puthukudiyiruppu

SLM - Sri Lankan military

The three decade long war between the majority Sinhalese spearheaded by the Sri Lankan military (SLM) and the minority Tamils spearheaded by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) came to an end with the defeat of the latter on the early hours of May 17, 2009 in the battle of Puthukudiyiruppu (PTK) in northeastern Sri Lanka. All Tamil civilians who lived in LTTE-controlled areas were either killed in the war or now kept involuntarily in camps surrounded by two-meter high barbed wire fences. A dark curtain was pulled around the camps with very little access to media and human rights organizations. Voices of the few Sinhalese and Tamils questioning the Sri Lankan government and military are silenced by harassment, intimidation, arrests and about a dozen cold-blooded murders.

Now the Sri Lankan government has turned its attention again towards the Tamil Diaspora in western democracies. It has asked western democracies to arrest known or alleged LTTE activists. It is reported that the Sri Lankan government would provide these western governments with documents captured during the war from LTTE offices.

This writer is all for law and justice. Yes, anyone living in western democracies who broke local, national or international laws should be prosecuted. No one is above the law for whatever reason. At the same time Sri Lankan government and military officials responsible for alleged war crimes should also be asked to stand trial before an impartial court. This writer, and likely most Tamils, believe in the fairness of the judicial system in western democracies.

The principal executioners of the 2006-2009 war, Mahinda Rajapaksa (President), Gotabaya Rajapaksa (President's brother and defense secretary) and General Sarath Fonseka (Army Chief) must be required to come in front of the courts trying LTTE activists and testify if civilians and surrendering LTTE fighters were killed under their orders. **Let those who are guilty be punished and let the punishment fit the crimes.**

It is unfair, and in fact unjust, to try and send someone to prison for buying ammunition for LTTE fighters, when those who ordered the indiscriminate shelling of areas crowded with civilians are living in luxury (and are presiding over victory celebrations). It is

unfair and unjust to try and jail someone for attempting to buy anti-aircraft guns, when those who dispatched bombers to rain death over thousands of civilians live free and are parading in front of adoring crowds as war heroes.

Let there be justice for all!

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9. Sri Lanka, Interpol and the United Nations

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: August 2010]

News reports appeared in early July 2010 that, at the request of Sri Lanka, Interpol had issued red notices on two Tamils living abroad for allegedly procuring weapons for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). These alleged weapons procurement occurred before the Sri Lankan ethnic war ended in May 2009 with the defeat of LTTE.

Less than a month before, in June 2010, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon appointed a panel to advise him on alleged war crimes by both the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE during the final phase of the war. Sri Lanka refused to cooperate with the panel and denied visa to panel members to enter Sri Lanka.

My question is this. Why is Interpol cooperating with and helping Sri Lanka while the latter refuses to cooperate with United Nations on its war crimes investigation? International cooperation should not be a one-way street. It should either be a two-way street or a no-way street. Interpol should blacklist Sri Lanka and ignore its requests for help until Sri Lanka cooperates with the United Nations Panel on war crimes.

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10.

To Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa's Head is through Sinhala Voters

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: November 2009]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Background Information
2. How to Put Pressure on the Sri Lankan President?

Abbreviations

EU - European Union

IDP - Internally Displaced Persons

LTTE- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

UN - United Nations

USA - United States of America

1. Background Information

[Those familiar with the background information on Sri Lankan ethnic conflict as it stood near the end of 2009 may skip to Section 2]

Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa made many promises to the international community, especially the donor co-chairs United States of America (USA), European Union (EU), Japan and Norway, before the fourth ethnic war between the Sri Lankan military and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) started in 2006 (Eelam War 4). One by one he broke every promise and waged the war with utter disregard for minority Tamil civilian lives. Eelam War 4 ended with many thousands of Tamil civilians dead and a quarter of million Tamil civilians put into internment camps under appalling conditions. Some western reporters compared these camps, called "welfare villages" by the government, to Nazi concentration camps. [Interested readers may visit websites of human rights organizations for more information on civilian deaths and conditions of the camps.]

Pleas from the United Nations (UN) and western democracies to release the Tamil civilians from the camps were met with angry protests and insults from the Sri Lankan government. With diplomatic backing and financial assistance from China and India, Sri Lankan government thumped its nose to countries and leaders criticizing the ill treatment of Tamil civilians.

Is there a way for the western democracies to put pressure on Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa to release the IDP from camps and settle them in their native

villages? Is there any way to put pressure on President Rajapaksa to seek an equitable solution to the ethnic problem confronting the island ever since its independence from British rule some 60 years ago? (IDP - internally displaced persons)

2. How to Put Pressure on the Sri Lankan President?

The only ones who can pressure President Rajapaksa are the Sinhalese voters of Sri Lanka. Sinhalese voters have shown no empathy for the sufferings of minority Tamil civilians. (We are thankful for the few Sinhalese who spoke up. God bless them one and all.) Most Sinhala voters do not care if Tamil children starve in IDP camps or they die of diseases due to the crowded conditions, poor sanitation and shortage of medicine. But they do care about their welfare and conditions of their own day-to-day living.

If the Sinhala masses are hit with some discomfort in their day to day living and it becomes clear that things would go back to normal for them only if Tamil civilian sufferings are remedied, there surely would be pressure on President Rajapaksa from Sinhala voters. That is the only way to Rajapaksa's head. Pleas, criticism and financial inducements from the international community have no effect on the president. Only way to President Rajapaksa is through Sinhala voters and Sinhalese voters are concerned only about their welfare.

Sinhala voters are not innocent bystanders. They are the cheerleaders for President Rajapaksa even as he waged the war with no regard for Tamil civilian deaths and then interned quarter million Tamil civilians. Remember, Sri Lanka is still a democracy for the Sinhalese (although not for the Tamils because their population is only a fraction of the Sinhalese). Sinhala politicians can win elections by being rabidly anti-Tamil in their rhetoric; tougher their stance on Tamils, more the votes they garner from Sinhala voters. Former Sri Lanka President J. R. Jayewardene once said, **"I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people.. now we cannot think of them, not about their lives or their opinion... the more you put pressure in the north, the happier the Sinhala people will be here.. Really if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy."** (Daily Telegraph, July 11, 1983)

Western democracies have already cut or suspended many financial aid programs to pressure the Sri Lankan government. They may further cut trade concessions and put trade sanctions. We do know that no international economic sanction is possible because of Chinese veto in the United Nations Security Council. Yet western democracies can put pressure on Sri Lanka through their own trade restrictions and other appropriate measures that would hit Sinhala voters. Then, and only then, would Sinhala voters ask President Mahinda Rajapaksa to address the sufferings of Tamil civilians and also consider a meaningful political solution to the six decade long ethnic conflict.

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தமிழ்நாட்டின் இரு பொற்காலங்களும், இன்றைய இருள் காலமும் (வரலாறு) - தஞ்சை நலங்கிள்ளி

The Two Golden Ages of Tamil Nadu and the Current Dark Days (History) (Tamil book) by Thanjai Nalankilli

தமிழ்நாடு இந்தி எதிர்ப்புப் போராட்டங்களும், தீக்குளிப்புகளும் - தஞ்சை நலங்கிள்ளி
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